

CHAPTER 11

Evaluating CSDP Operations

BY 2011, THE EU HAD DISPATCHED ABOUT 70,000 SOLDIERS and civilian personnel in more than twenty operations. All have been coalitions of the able and willing drawn from among EU states and third countries. The deployments show that the EU has specialized in stabilization and reconstruction operations (military and civilian). Civilian operations have carried out security sector reforms and monitored cease-fire and peace accords, while military operations have carried out postconflict stabilization tasks, notably peacekeeping. All operations were conducted with the consent of the host nations. The EU has not done forced-entry operations and has not fought any wars (conventional or unconventional). Also, the balance between military and civilian deployments is skewed. There have only been seven military operations, which is surprising because the CSDP was conceived to give the EU military firepower. Going beyond these general observations, this chapter asks how well CSDP operations (military and civilian) have worked, what differences they have made, and why they have not done better. CSDP missions have a mixed balance sheet, and the chapter explains why this is so. Measuring success in politics is not straightforward and depends on the choice of measuring rod. In this chapter, a series of evaluation criteria are used to offer a nuanced judgment of the CSDP record.

Evaluating Mission Success

One of the most commonly used yardsticks to evaluate CSDP operations is how well they have carried out their mandates. This measur-

ing rod directs attention to mission design and management, including the provision of sufficient funds and personnel. The record shows that some of the issues, particularly civil-military coordination, regularly flagged by the EU itself and by policy analysts are less important than generally assumed. Insufficient cooperation between military and civilian missions has not been a major obstacle standing in the way of effective mandate implementation. The lack of civil-military integration in the planning and initial conduct of EUFOR Althea and the EUPM, and the dysfunctional policy overlaps this failure generated, were exceptional. This said, civil-military coordination is an important issue in any nation-building intervention, notably when carried out in hostile environments. As the EU intends to involve itself more firmly in such interventions in the future, including through the concurrent use of Battle Groups and civilian missions, the need for tight civil-military cooperation will grow. Also, civilian operations would clearly benefit from better civil-military cooperation in capability development in areas such as transportation, communications, security, and logistics.

A number of severe hiccups in mission start-up and in the implementation phase have affected mandate implementation. Initially, civilian missions were hampered by their narrow mandates, which ignored functional linkages in the security sector. The functional interdependence between the various components of the security sector, such as policing and prosecution, requires a holistic approach to reforms. The narrow focus of the first generation of civilian CSDP missions reflected the decision by the EU to build up the civilian CSDP around discrete priority areas such as law enforcement and the rule of law. Second-generation missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kosovo no longer suffer from this problem but have benefited from the EU's turn to multifunctional mission designs.

Among the most challenging or simply most annoying issues for civilian CSDP missions have been cumbersome funding procedures and difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified personnel. The costs of civilian missions are funded from the EU budget, which is managed by the European Commission. Commission red tape has caused many delays in the procurement of basic mission equipment such as computers, telephones, and armored cars. Also, missions from Kosovo to the DRC and Afghanistan have struggled to reach and maintain their authorized personnel strength. In the absence of effective national recruitment mechanisms, including incentive packages, there are simply not enough volunteers for the largest and toughest

missions. Military operations do not have this problem because soldiers go where they are ordered. However, military operations have suffered from a lack of strategic and tactical airlift, which has made rapid interventions, rotations in and out of theater, and logistics challenging. Both civilian and military missions have been affected by bureaucratic infighting among different branches of EU foreign policy and by related difficulties in coordinating action on the ground among different members of the EU family.¹ Institutional politicking and turfing have prevented the EU from making the most of its comprehensive toolbox for tackling international security problems.

These shortcomings and difficulties have degraded mandate implementation. They have contributed to the fact that missions have failed to achieve all their objectives and that some objectives have been accomplished only with considerable delay. Yet such problems are not unusual but are familiar to any international security provider. They do not invalidate the judgment that CSDP missions have, by and large, been reasonably efficient and effective in accomplishing their mandates. This is true even of the CSDP police mission in Afghanistan, which diligently carries out its mandate to "support the reform process towards a trusted and efficient police service." Measured in terms of how well operations have fulfilled their mandates, the CSDP must be judged a qualified success. For critics of the CSDP, this very success is part of the problem. They argue that easy or vaguely formulated mission mandates exclude the possibility of failure. The price for success on this count is a CSDP that is irrelevant to most contemporary security problems.

Another evaluation criterion is whether CSDP operations have enhanced the EU's visibility in international security affairs. The answer is yes. From eastern and southeastern Europe to Africa and Asia, the EU has planted the CSDP flag, and local governments have taken note. While the international assessment of CSDP operations may not in each case be positive, international demand for them has risen considerably. Both troubled countries themselves and the international community have asked the EU to deploy its forces and civilian personnel to deal with trouble spots. Especially satisfying for the EU, Washington has shown its appreciation of the CSDP by supporting or advocating EU deployments in the Western Balkans, the Middle East, and Afghanistan. Overall, there has been more international demand for CSDP operations than the EU has been willing to meet.

A closely related yardstick measures the geopolitical impact of CSDP operations. On this count, success has been limited. For instance,

in the Western Balkans and Georgia, CSDP operations have strengthened the credibility and political influence of the EU and have given it additional diplomatic leverage in relations with the concerned governments. This said, the EU's influence in world politics is mostly shaped by non-CSDP actions such as the European Neighbourhood Policy and trade and development policies. The geopolitical impact of CSDP operations is often limited by the fact that it is a common rather than single policy. National foreign policies coexist with the CSDP, and when the former diverge they inevitably undermine the latter. This has obviously been the case in Afghanistan and Iraq but also in less prominent missions in post-Soviet space and Africa. On geopolitical matters, it is the United States that continues to be the preferred interlocutor of policymakers in places such as Georgia, Afghanistan, and Palestine, where the EU planted its CSDP flag. In Africa, CSDP deployments have not prevented China from enhancing its commercial and political presence and influence in geo-economically important countries such as the DRC and Chad. For Washington, NATO and not the EU remains the privileged interlocutor in international security matters. Also, the CSDP has had little impact on Russia's attitudes toward the EU. Critics use these facts to argue that it is incumbent upon the EU to use the CSDP more robustly to defend and promote its interests and values abroad. If it fails to get the CSDP right, it will lose out in the emerging strategic environment of a more competitive international system (Howorth 2009).

Moving away from EU-centric yardsticks for evaluating CSDP operations, more demanding yardsticks measure what difference the CSDP operations have made in the world. Their ability to make a difference has been varied and limited, though not negligible.

To begin with, CSDP troops have successfully kept the peace in a number of postconflict societies and protected vulnerable population groups. CSDP monitors have facilitated the implementation of ceasefire agreements and peace deals, while CSDP police officers have made law enforcement more effective and democratic. CSDP judges and prosecutors have strengthened the rule of law, and CSDP penitentiary experts have made prisons more humane. In carrying out these tasks, CSDP missions have prevented conflicts, promoted stability, and contributed to good governance. Furthermore, CSDP operations, especially those in the Western Balkans, have undoubtedly strengthened EU internal security. Through their security sector reforms, the missions have combated organized crime in their host countries and the associated threats to the EU, such as drug trafficking, weapons smuggling, and illegal migration.

On the downside, the CSDP operations' success in making a difference in the world does not reflect a focus on interventions concerned with achieving maximum impact on stability, peace, and human security. As the former head of the EDA put it, "The issue with [the CSDP] operational record as a whole is its lack of ambition" (Witney 2008: 41). For the most part, the EU has avoided sending its troops into harm's way. Most operations have operated in permissive or semipermissive environments. The EU has not stopped harm when it could have done so for fear of casualties among its troops and civilian personnel. It has refused to authorize robust peacemaking operations to stop brutal civil strife, even with the blessing of the United Nations, because it did not want to allocate the necessary funds. Many missions have been small, drawing on an EU staff of less than 100, although some had only 10 to 30 EU staff. The largest military mission has been EUFOR Althea, which initially had 7,000 troops, while the largest civilian mission has been EULEX Kosovo, which has an authorized strength of nearly 2,000 internationals. When judged against the security challenges on the ground, most missions have been underresourced. However, their symbolic impact has been at least as important as their practical impact, because they have boosted the collective identity and self-confidence of the EU. The limitations in size, resources, and real-world impact of CSDP operations have prompted some analysts to argue that the CSDP has "come to serve as an alibi for a tendency to avoid broader international security responsibilities" (Menon 2009: 228). Clearly, CSDP missions have not made as much difference in the world as one would expect, given the EU's capabilities and its identity and global vision as a force for good. Hence, those who support this vision challenge the EU to do more to live up to its ideals (Glasius and Kaldor 2006).

Finally, the impact of CSDP operations can also be analyzed by looking at one of the most salient contemporary international security issues—international terrorism. Such an analysis shows that combating global terrorism is not one of the strengths of CSDP missions (Keohane 2008; Shepherd 2006). In this area, they are bit players. This fact reflects general shortcomings of EU security policy. EU states often find it hard to cooperate because they have divergent threat perceptions and national interests. Furthermore, many states are reluctant to allocate more national resources to give the CSDP a greater role in counterterrorism. Critics who focus on what they consider the EU's irresponsible softness on terrorism overlook many EU governments' genuine conviction that the best way to fight the phenomenon is not through military force (Delpech 2002). For Western European states,

this conviction is rooted in the experience of Euro-terrorism, which had its heyday in the 1970s and 1980s.² Europeans framed their mostly homegrown terrorism as an instance of organized crime. Hence, they dealt with it by means of the police and courts, and the predominance of the justice model of fighting terrorism persisted after September 11. The high representative for the CFSP, Solana, expressed the EU's approach thus: "I firmly believe that the military option alone cannot defeat terror. Judicial, police, and intelligence cooperation should be the focal point for action. This does not mean that we are not working on how [the CSDP] can offer a meaningful contribution. But [the CSDP] is not at the core of our efforts" (Solana 2004a).

The EU has identified four counterterrorism roles for the CSDP (Council of the European Union 2004). First, CSDP missions may contribute to the prevention of terrorism in their theaters of operation through noncombat operations such as the gathering of tactical intelligence about terrorist activities. Second, CSDP operations may help protect critical civilian infrastructures in their host countries against terrorist plots. Third, CSDP operations may carry out consequence management, that is, carry out reactive measures to mitigate or ameliorate the destructive effects of terrorist attacks.³ Finally, CSDP missions may support third countries in their fight against terrorism. Much of what can be counted as, admittedly, indirect CSDP counterterrorism falls under this last category. CSDP stabilization and reconstruction missions have improved the effectiveness of local armed forces, law enforcement, and border security. Effective security services make it harder for terrorists to get away with their actions and to use the country as a safe haven. Moreover, CSDP missions have improved the governance of local security sectors. Accountable security governance reduces the likelihood of violent radicalization and terrorist recruitment among citizens. It also makes it less likely that local security sector personnel go rogue by becoming involved in terrorist acts.

The EU can justifiably claim that its CSDP missions have been part of international efforts to combat global terrorism. Yet in crucial theaters of confrontation between terrorism and its opponents, such as in Afghanistan and Iraq, CSDP operations have lacked the resources to bring about substantial reforms of the local security sectors. The risibly low personnel strength of EUPOL Afghanistan is a worst case and has condemned the mission to a marginal role in the stabilization and reconstruction of policing in Afghanistan. The even smaller EUJUST LEX Iraq is hardly more impressive. On the issue of combating international terrorism, the CSDP falls short not only of the expectations of its critics but of its own aspirations.

In conclusion, CSDP operations have a mixed record. They have improved the "actorness" of the EU in security affairs, that is, its "capacity to behave actively and deliberately in relation to other actors in the international system" (Sjöstedt 1977: 16). Mission impact on international crises has been real but limited. The EU could have used the CSDP more forcefully to make a difference in world politics and shown a greater willingness to share the burden of global security management with the United States. Observers have criticized the EU for the gap between its aspirations and potential power and the modest operational record of the CSDP (Hill 1993; Toje 2008). This discrepancy, in turn, explains why CSDP missions have done little to change the EU's relations with major security providers and rivals. While taking note of the CSDP, they have realized that for the time being it remains an underresourced capability for the projection of limited power. The danger for the EU is that, if the limitations of its CSDP missions persist, they will do it more damage than good in the long run. Indeed, some observers claim that this is already happening. "By choosing marginal activities, the EU has actually increased skepticism about its seriousness of purpose rather than built a foundation for more complex and demanding undertakings" (Schake 2006: 105).

Explaining the Limited Record of CSDP Missions

What explains the limited record of CSDP missions? There are two main reasons why CSDP operations have not achieved more. One is related to political will, the other to capabilities and manpower. Both are closely related. Beginning with capabilities and manpower, the EU's record of building up its military capabilities is respectable but limited (see Chapter 6). For the time being, many armed conflicts around the world remain too demanding for CSDP expeditionary forces to make a difference. The civilian CSDP has been hampered by national administrative systems, which have been ill prepared for meeting the personnel requirements of CSDP deployments. As Swedish foreign minister Carl Bildt (2008) put it, "While we have standing military units ready to go—notably the two EU Battle Groups ready to deploy within 10 days—we don't have policemen, judges, lawyers or different instructors ready in the same way."

Yet the capability and manpower arguments have their limits. The key problem of the CSDP lies somewhere else. Shortfalls notwithstanding, EU states together have powerful civilian and military means of intervention. Although the EU has Battle Groups on

standby for robust interventions, they have not been deployed. Also, it is not for a lack of manpower that the EU has not fielded a stronger police mission in Afghanistan. The biggest challenge faced by the CSDP is the lack of sufficient political will to make the most of existing CSDP capabilities and available human resources. A multidimensional problem (Keukeleire and MacNaughtan 2008: 140–141), the issue of political will refers to divergent national interests on specific policy issues such as a particular CSDP deployment. More broadly, it refers to different national worldviews and conceptions of the CSDP's role. For instance, some EU states want the EU to be primarily a civilian foreign policy actor, while others are reluctant to act forcefully without the United States. Certain states do not want to bear the costs in blood and money of mounting robust CSDP missions (for more on these divergent views, see Chapter 7).

The problem of political will is less acute in the case of civilian missions than in the case of military missions. Civilian deployments frequently rise above the lowest common denominator of member governments, not because EU states share an actionable strategic vision of the role of civilian CSDP operations in the world but because even small states are able to upload their preferences to the CSDP. Often backed by EU officials, they manage to persuade other capitals to back their pet CSDP projects. Fellow EU states let themselves be persuaded because the proposed missions tend to be cheap and unlikely to result in casualties. The successful uploading of national preferences to the CSDP has given the civilian CSDP an activist profile, and the considerable number of civilian deployments is a sign of the CSDP's success. Yet the role of policy entrepreneurs in shaping civilian deployment decisions has a downside, because the ensuing deployment pattern makes little sense in strategic terms and reflects a proliferation of mostly small missions that struggle to make a difference on the ground.

When it comes to military EU operations, the political will problem is severe. Because decisions remain closely tied to the lowest common denominator of states, military deployments have been few and, with the exception of EUFOR Althea, unreasonably short and lacking in ambition. Just like civilian deployments, they have not amounted to the strategic positioning of the EU on the international stage. Policy entrepreneurship and uploading have influenced military deployment decisions, notably in Africa, but their impact has been less powerful than in the civilian CSDP. The political constraints holding EU military deployments in check are powerful. Military operations tend to be politically more salient and controver-

sial within and between EU states than civilian ones. To begin with, they raise politically hard questions about the division of labor between the EU and NATO. Atlanticist EU governments (more pro-US) and Europeanist EU governments (less pro-US) are likely to provide contradictory answers to these questions. Also, military EU operations are more expensive than civilian ones and tend to be larger than civilian missions, and participating governments have to pick up most of the costs of deploying and running them. This limits the enthusiasm of countries such as Germany for EU military deployments. They see their own armed forces and the military CSDP as an easy source of budget savings. By cutting back on their armed forces and limiting funding for the military CSDP, they save money.

The main political obstacle standing in the way of more robust military CSDP deployments is that for each proposed operation there are EU governments reluctant to send their soldiers to die for its objectives. This points to a dilemma between effectiveness and the consensus principle. If consensus among EU states remains a requirement for military missions, then deployments will continue to be unimpressive. Asle Toje calls this phenomenon the consensus-expectations gap. The “lack of decisionmaking procedures capable of overcoming dissent [opens] a gap between what the member-states are expected to agree on and what they are actually able to consent to” (Giegerich 2008; Toje 2008: 122). The argument leads to the conclusion that unless the EU changes the procedures it uses to decide military operations, it will be condemned to remain a military player of limited importance. One solution that has been proposed to plug the consensus-expectations gap is the creation of directorates made up of a few like-minded countries that are ready and able to exercise leadership on CSDP issues (Giegerich and Gross 2006; Keukeleire 2001). While not as elegant as the alternative of extending majority voting to CSDP deployment decisions, the idea has the advantage of being more realistic. Directorates would make the EU more like NATO, in which political-military decisionmaking benefits from the existence of a military and diplomatic leader, which is powerful enough to organize collective NATO action. CSDP directorates would be the equivalent of US leadership in NATO. Membership scenarios for CSDP directorates range from variable, issue-specific leadership coalitions to institutionalized small-group leadership centered on the Big Two—Britain and France—or the Big Three, which includes Germany.

The Lisbon Treaty provides a partial solution to the vexing consensus-expectations gap in the form of a provision for permanent

structured cooperation. The notion of permanent structured cooperation is not identical to the concept of directorate. However, they share the idea of a pioneer group of countries leading the way in military cooperation. Permanent structured cooperation allows the militarily more capable member states to press ahead with deeper military integration. The provision can be used to promote closer cooperation in EU capability development and the qualitative improvement of forces. While permanent structured cooperation formally does not apply to deployments, “one may reasonably expect those who participate [in permanent structured cooperation] to show more willingness to participate in operations” (Biscop 2008: 12).

The accomplishments of the CSDP are real but so are its limitations. The overall record of CSDP missions is characterized by incompleteness, unevenness, and partial frustration. This is not unique to the CSDP. Indeed, this is precisely how Philippe Schmitter (1970, 2004) has characterized EU integration. Schmitter argues that interaction between incompleteness, unevenness, and partial frustration has propelled European integration forward. There is considerable evidence that such a dialectic is also at work in the CSDP. There have been slow but steady improvements in the planning, command, and control of CSDP missions. Capability gaps are being tackled, and a common strategic culture is being forged by the EU’s PSC. The EU has shown a persistent readiness to deploy missions, albeit so far in a haphazard way. The Lisbon Treaty continues to improve coordination between the CFSP and supranational foreign policy, enabling CSDP missions to benefit from closer cooperation with EU embassies on the ground. Last but not least, permanent structured cooperation provides a means for the EU to limit the negative impact of the political will problem and to send more robust missions into harm’s way to promote peace and security.

Notes

1. Some of these problems are alleviated though not eliminated by the Lisbon Treaty. Improvements are to be expected when it comes to interinstitutional bureaucratic politics, insufficient coordination on the ground, and the cumbersome procurement procedures. The former two problems are alleviated by the creation of the EU diplomatic service, while the latter problem is alleviated by the creation of new rapid financing mechanisms stipulated by the Lisbon Treaty.

2. The most notorious terror groups of the time were the ethnonationalist group Basque Homeland and Freedom (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, or ETA), the West German Red Army Faction (Rote Armee Fraktion, or RAF), the Italian

Red Brigade (Brigate Rosse), the French Direct Action (Action Directe), and the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

3. While CSDP missions can only be used outside the EU, CSDP structures and capabilities may be used to protect citizens and institutions in the EU against terrorist attacks and to deal with the consequences of such attacks. To this end, the EUMS maintains a “database of military assets and capabilities relevant to the protection of civilian populations against the effects of terrorist attacks” (European Commission 2003).